



ELECTRICAL CURRENTS

Newsletter from the Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector

Ron Fuller, Chief Electrical Inspector

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● ALL OPEN WINDOW OPPORTUNITIES WILL END JULY 31, 2004!!!

The “open window” opportunity for certain contractors and administrators ([WAC 296-46B-930](#)) and specific specialty electricians ([WAC 296-46B-950](#)) will end July 31, 2004. The department will begin full enforcement of the rules for the 03A-Domestic Well, 06A-HVAC/refrigeration system, 06B-HVAC/refrigeration system-Restricted, 07-Nonresidential Maintenance, 07A-Nonresidential Lighting Maintenance, 07B-Residential Maintenance, 07C-Restricted Nonresidential Maintenance, 07D-Appliance Repair, 07E-Equipment Repair, and 10-Door, Gate, and Similar Systems electrical specialties on August 1, 2004. Applications delivered in person or postmarked after July 31st will be returned. NO EXCEPTIONS! Unless mandated to do so by legislative action, **the department will not extend this deadline in rule.** “Word-of-mouth” seems to be the only effective way to reach those operating outside the law. If you know individuals who may be unaware they are working illegally in these specialties, please inform them about the deadline to “grandfather” previous experience and come into compliance.

● Latest Revisions To WAC 296-46B Will Be Effective June 30, 2004

Upon the effective date of the [WAC rule](#), June 30, 2004, the new version of the electrical RCW and WAC will be printed on CDs for distribution to the individuals and firms we regulate. The department will mail one free copy to each contractor license, administrator, electrician, or training certificate holder in good standing. Owners may obtain CDs at regional L&I offices. We will use your current address-of-record in our database, so if you have relocated since your last renewal you should update your mailing address with a [Request For Change Of Address](#) form available on the forms page at our Web site.

Anyone requesting a printed copy or a second CD must pay the \$5 fee required in the WAC rule.

Electrical permits purchased after the WAC effective date will be inspected to the new rules. Plan review projects received after June 30, 2004 will be reviewed for compliance with the new rules. In addition to various technical changes, the rules incorporate a 3.2% fee increase. Important technical changes will be highlighted in future ELECTRICAL CURRENTS articles.

● Compliance Training Provided For Tacoma Power Electrical Inspectors

To promote safety and a competitive marketplace, Tacoma Power managers requested L&I to provide compliance training for their electrical inspectors. On May 26th the Tacoma Power inspectors received a full day of training in licensing compliance requirements and verification techniques. The electrical inspectors will be checking licenses and credentials on electrical installations and making referrals to the department when non-compliance activity is found.

Properly trained and qualified electrical workers produce a safer installation. Tacoma Power joins the City of Seattle in having requested this training from L&I for their electrical inspectors. We encourage all local jurisdictions to join in working with the department in improving statewide compliance with the electrical laws and rules.

● Protect Yourself. Electrical Contractors Must Not Purchase Permits For Another Firm

Since the department is holding individuals and firms accountable for willfully violating installation safety standards (i.e. cutting off grounding electrodes), it is even more critical that electrical contractors obtain permits only for the work their business performs. For example, HVAC contractors installing thermostats and general construction contractors installing temporary power pedestals and poles are required to obtain permits under their business name for work their firm is performing. The statute

requires that “each entity” responsible for electrical work must obtain a permit for that work. If the description of work on an electrical permit is expanded to “cover” the work of another firm, the permit purchaser is held responsible for the work, good or bad. Both the administrator and electrical contractor for the permit holder may be cited and suspended for unsafe installation work shown on their permit.

● Verify The Status Of Continuing Education Courses

Please be informed that there are companies that may take advantage of the mandatory requirement to obtain CEU's for your electrician, master electrician, and administrator certificate renewal. Some national and local electrical education companies offer “CEU” classes locally that are not actually approved by Labor and Industries.

Don't let your time and course fees be wasted; make sure the classes that you're considering are approved for CEU credit in Washington. The electrical section Web site lists approved courses (and valid course numbers) by the year the course was submitted or renewed. Since courses are approved for a three-year period, you may need to check the listings for several years to view all current courses. The expiration date is clearly identified for each course in the lists. You may check the status of a course at:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Electrical/ExamEd/ContinueEd>.

● WAC Rule Modifies NEC Requirement For Outdoor Spas And Hot Tubs

For an outdoor installation of a self-contained or packaged spa or hot tub for a single-family dwelling, NEC 680.42(C) allows any of the wiring methods in NEC Chapter 3 that contain an insulated or covered copper equipment grounding conductor to be used for the interior building wiring of the circuit serving the equipment. [WAC 296-46B-680\(10\)](#) allows the appropriate NEC Chapter 3 wiring methods to be extended to the outdoor equipment as well. This rule does not alter the requirements for a properly sized (not smaller than 12 AWG), copper equipment grounding conductor, nor does it diminish the Code requirements for proper physical protection with raceway and wiring methods suitable for wet or damp locations when necessary.

● Special Licensing Required To Install And Wire Elevators

Labor and Industries elevator inspectors report that electrical contractors and electricians occasionally install wheelchair lifts, stair lifts, and dumbwaiters or perform alteration work on conveyances without obtaining the appropriate elevator permit. This illegal activity will be compounded when the new elevator mechanic licensing law goes into effect on July 1, 2004. Any person wishing to perform conveyance work regulated under [chapter 70.87 RCW](#) and [chapter 296-96 WAC](#) must be a licensed elevator mechanic employed by a licensed elevator contractor.

Electrical contractors and electricians will not be able to perform any installation or alteration work on the elevator, or any other conveyance (i.e. wheelchair lift, stair lift, dumbwaiter) “downstream” of the equipment disconnecting means without obtaining the new licensing. For details on the requirements and qualifications for this licensing contact Dotty Stanlaske, Chief Elevator Inspector at 360-902-6128.

● Electrical Question of the Month

This Month's Question: A 16-foot rigid metal pole used to support a luminaire **A)** may be used as a raceway for the circuit conductors to the luminaire... **B)** must be provided with a minimum 2" X 4" access handhole near the base. **C)** must be provided with a grounding terminal inside the pole. **D)** all of the above.

Last Month's Question: A 200-amp panelboard inside a single-family dwelling unit is supplied by a feeder from a 200-amp pedestal service located 75 feet away from the building. The required building disconnecting means must be located... **A)** anywhere inside the building except a bathroom, shower room, or clothes closet, **B)** nearest the point of entrance of the conductors into the building, **C)** so that the feeder raceway extends no more than 15 feet inside the building, **D)** in the service pedestal. The answer is: **A)** [WAC 296-46B-225(2) and -230(11)].